DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 222 275 PS 013 133

AUTHOR Plummer, Diane Loretta
TITLE The Impact of Grade Retention on the Social Development of Elementary School Children.
PUB DATE 82
NOTE 68p.; Master's Thesis, University of Georgia.

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Back to Basics; Comparative Analysis; Elementary Education; *Elementary School Students; Grade 2; Grade 5; *Grade Repetition; Negative Attitudes; *Peer Relationship; Self Concept; *Self Esteem; *Social Bias; Social Cognition; *Social Development; Student Attitudes

ABSTRACT

Differential effects of promotion from and retention in grade on second- and fifth-grade students were investigated. It was hypothesized that (1) children retained in grade will evoke negative perceptions and thus have lower status than children regularly promoted; (2) more favorable attributions will be made to children who are regularly promoted than to their retained counterparts; (3) children with perceived higher status will be preferred over children who are retained for academic and social tasks; (4) given comparable task performance, regularly promoted students will receive more rewards than will children who have been retained; and (5) children who are retained will have less favorable social cognitions and expectancies about themselves and their school environment than will children who are regularly promoted. Subjects, 219 children attending a rural elementary school in northeast Georgia, provided data on self-esteem measures as well as on measures or tasks assessing peer reward allocation, social partner choice, task partner choice, impressions and attitudes about retained students and the school environment, and report card expectancy. Race of examiner and order of presentation of measures were counterbalanced. Results are discussed, and related materials are appended. (RH)

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THE IMPACT OF GRADE RETENTION ON THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

by

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B.A., Morris Brown College, 1978

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of the University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment
of the
Requirements for the Degree
MASTER OF SCIENCE

ATHENS, GEORGIA

1982

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Acknowledgement

This thesis would not have been possible without the assistance and encouragement from my friends and colleagues; and I would like to express my sincere gratitude at this time. Initially, I would like to convey my thanks to Christ, who not only strengthened and sustained me, but also blessed me with friends and family who provided me with the moral support I needed to complete this project. Some of these people are Mr. and Mrs. Edward Plummer, my parents; Mrs. Debbra Thoroughgood, my sister; Earl Plummer, my brother; Mrs. Alma Glover, my aunt; and Mrs. Annie Ellis, my grandmother; also my dear friends, Cynthia Colton, Jacquelyn Johnson, Patricia Johnson, William Lewis, Cassandra Marcus, Paula Murphy, and Joyce Smith.

I am also indebted to the experimenters who helped collect the data for this project: Beverly Bell, Nora Connors, Mike Edwards, Lisa Wilson Kelly, Jan Jennings, Lynn Musser, and Wendell Walker. I sincerely appreciate the efforts and patience of the persons who assisted with coding the data: Kathy Francis, Herbert Latney, Carol Ogletree, Kamau Dawud Shabaka, and C. Lafaye Hargrove-Williams.

To Jennifer Campbell, my office mate, confidant, and above all my computer programming consultant, I cannot find the words that would express enough gratitude; so, I will just go on record as saying thank you Jennifer.

This thesis would not exist in its fullness without the suggestions and advice from my committee members, Dr. Sidney Rosen and Dr.

David Shaffer. Moreover, I owe deep gratitude to my major advisor, Dr. William G. Graziano, whose guidance has proven to be priceless.

A special thanks goes to the principal, faculty, and staff at the institution where I interviewed the project participants.

I am sincerely grateful to many people for their help with this thesis, however the aforementioned persons are pre-eminent.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Acknowledgements iii

List of Tables vii

CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION 1

Grade Retention 3

Equity Theory 6

Status Generalization 7

Mixed-Age Interaction 8

Summary 9

II. METHOD 11

Overview of Design 11

Participants 11

Procedure 12

Measures of Self-Esteem 12

Measures of Peer Discrimination 13

Allocation Task 13

Partner Choice 14

Social Parnter 14

Task Partner 15

CHAPTER Page

Impressions and Attitudes 15

Measures of Social Cognitions and Expectations . . 15

Incomplete Sentence stems 15

Report Card Expectancy 15

III. RESULTS 17

Observer Reliability 17

Manipulation Check 17

Discrimination Hypothesis 20

Impression and Attitude Measures 20

Supplemental Analyses 24

Partner Choice 26

Task Parner 26

Social Partner 27

Allocation Task 28

P - Correlations 30

Social Cognitions and Expectations 30

Incomplete Sentence Stems 30

Report-Card Expectancy 34

Self-Esteem Measures 34

Actual Self-Concept 35

Self-Concept Component 36

Ideal-Concept Component 38

Social-Concept Component 39

CHAPTER Page

IV. DISCUSSION 41

Reference Notes 51

References 52

Appendix A 57

Appendix B 58

Appendix C 59

Appendix D 60

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1.	Univariate Results for Impression and Attitudes Controlling for "Hit" Responses	23
2.	Allocation Task "Equal" Performance	29
3.	MANOVA Results for Self-Esteem Measures	37
4.	Univariate Results for Ideal-Concept	39

Introduction

One of the most influential institutions for the development of children is the elementary school. This influence extends beyond intellectual development into the general realm of social development (see Centra & Potter, 1980; Gump, 1980: Hetherington & Parke, 1979). In the Caswell and Foshay text Education in the Elementary School (1957), George Strayer presents an idealized view of the school: "The good elementary school is one in which children learn the tool of inquiry, respect for differences, and open-minded avoidance of prejudice, the difficult relationship between freedom and responsibility, and the art of cooperating..." (p. vi). Furthermore, it has been claimed that the school is second only to the home as an institution that determines the growing individual's self-concept and his or her attitudes of self-acceptance or self-rejection. It has been consistently observed that type of school, school organization, and teacher-pupil relationships all influence children's self-concepts (Metcalfe, 1981).

In recent years, as part of the "back-to-basics" movement in education, questions have been raised about the socialization mission of the schools. Some writers have argued, for example, that schools should focus their attention on developing children's fundamental academic competencies rather than attempting to develop tangential qualities like self-concept (see Lerner, 1981). Nonetheless, there is evidence that "tangential" qualities like self-concept are related to academic performance. Brookover, Thomas, and Patterson (1974) found that

student self-conceptions of ability predicted school performance better than IQ. Lamy (1965) suggested that self-perceptions and IQ in kindergarten predicted reading achievement in first grade equally well. Wattenberg and Clifford (1964) successfully predicted reading achievement two and a half years later from measures of self-concept procured from kindergarteners. Entwisle and Hayduk (1978) provide data which further support the relationship between self-esteem and the school environment. For instance, by the end of the third grade, even before the age of competent reading and writing skills are acquired, children have developed fairly stable and complex self-images. How well children are doing academically at that age is a good, long term indicator of school performance. The implications are that school performance can be enhanced or debilitated as a function of the student's self-esteem.

There are at least two school-related factors that may influence children's self-evaluation and self-concept. The first of these is actual academic performance, which gradually becomes part of a reciprocal feedback system. That is, actual academic performance influences self-evaluation, which in turn influences subsequent academic performance. Johnson (1981) assumes that children who have experienced chronic failure (failed at least three years) in school develop feelings of learned helplessness. Johnson's study explored two facets of learned helplessness, whether value of outcome would be a predictor of passivity and how self-concept is affected by failure. The results were consistent with learned helplessness theory: low self-concept was predicted independently and significantly by school failure, internal attributions for failure, and external attributions for success (Johnson, 1981).

A second school-related factor influencing children's self-evaluation is teachers' attitudes toward students and their performance (e.g., Adams, 1963; Barocas, 1974; Brophy & Good, 1970; Cooper, 1979; Lerner & Lerner, 1977; Rich, 1975; Rist, 1970; Rosenthal & Jacobsen, 1969; Seaver, 1975). Teacher expectations are considered a primary source for information about expected abilities which shape children's self-concepts. Particularly the expectancies that children hold about their capability for academic performance (Braun, 1976; Brophy & Good, 1974; Good, 1980; Weinstein, et al., Note 1). Achievement is affected in that the child internalizes information from the teacher-pupil interactions into self-expectations and the expressions of those self-expectations into behavior and academic performance (Cooper, 1979; Weinstein, et al., Note 1).

Considering the information outlined above, it is not surprising to find that a child's success or failure in the school environment is not just a matter of a child's individual efforts or of effective or ineffective teaching. Nor is it merely a matter of a favorable emotional climate at home. The child who does not compete successfully in school is likely to develop problems in living and in coping with his or her surroundings (Chase, 1972). Taken together, these studies suggest that intellectual and social development go hand in hand, and that "tangential" qualities like self-concept and self-evaluation may be very important for subsequent intellectual development.

There is another hidden aspect of the "back-to-basics" movement that presents a serious problem to the schools. If "minimum competencies" in the basics are the criteria for academic success, what is to be done with the students who do not meet these criteria? The

traditional answer to this question is to retain children in grade until they had reached the appropriate mastery level. This solution is not uncommon: approximately one million American children are involved in this process annually (Jackson, 1975).

It is surprising, given the importance of the problem and the large number of children involved, how little is known about the impact of grade retention. There is no consistent, generally accepted basis for non-promotion. Children may be retained due to deficiencies in academic performance or to deficiencies in "social maturity" (Jackson, 1975). Furthermore, there is no consistent relationship between the achievement and ability of the student and her or his nonpromotion. Almost all surveys of student progress reveal cases in which children of low achievement have been promoted and children of higher achievement have been failed. Additionally, schools with higher average achievement often fail a larger percentage of students than schools with lower average achievement (Caswell & Foshay, 1957).

Ayers (1909) reported the first comprehensive analysis of the progress of children from grade to grade. Ayers concluded that the rate of grade retention varied from 10% to 34%; the average rate of grade retention was significantly higher in the first grade than others; and the rate of grade retention was significantly higher for boys than for girls. These results have been replicated from 1912 - 1975; the differences being the rate of grade retention variance in different cities and states, the range being between 2% and 20%. According to Jackson (1975) there are also differences for nonpromotion for minority and nonminority students, respectively, 0.7% and 0.4% in Minnesota, Oregon, and Utah, and in Louisiana 7.9% and 3.6%.

Grade retention as a solution to the "minimal competencies" problem may itself pose further problems. Early reviews suggest that nonpromotion, as a means of improving achievement level, does not work and that it is likely to be a deterrent to acceptable achievement (e.g., Caswell & Foshay, 1957, Sandin, 1944). Specifically, Caswell and Foshay (1957) and Sandin (1944) found that the nonpromoted child will suffer from depression and discouragement. The personality of a child is affected, most often unfavorably, when he or she is not promoted. The explanation of the phenomenon offered by Caswell and Foshay was that the children cannot discover the relationships between their activities and outcomes and hence do not see a road to success. This ambiguity will inadvertently lead to distrust of abilities, and very often to expectation of further failure.

Sandin (1944) designed a study in which he assessed the social and emotional adjustments of regularly promoted and nonpromoted students. He obtained information from observations in the classroom and student records which showed that nonpromotion resulted in the children being placed with classmates who were younger, smaller, and in many cases, less mature. Sandin asserts that these differences are important because they appear as factors that influence children's rejection or acceptance as companions. From his data, Sandin concluded that children who had been retained did not consider their younger, regularly promoted classmates appropriate companions.

The studies by Caswell and Foshay (1957) and by Sandin (1944) are important because they suggest that peer reactions can have a strong influence on a child's adjustment to school. If retained children are rejected or are targets of discrimination in their new classes, then

academic and familial problems associated with retention will be compounded, and self-evaluation may suffer further. Although the precise mechanism responsible for such discrimination remains unclear, some clues may be found in the literature on equity theory. From the perspective of equity theory, judgments of deservingness are an integral part of resource exchanges that characterize social behavior. A social exchange is equitable when resources (outcomes) are dispensed in proportion to contributions or inputs (Walster, Berscheid, & Walster, 1973). Thus, a worker who does 20% of the work deserves 20% of the available resources.

From the perspective of equity theory, it could be argued that rejection and peer discrimination against the retained child may be seen as the deserved outcome for the input of poor school performance. By itself, this interpretation is too simplistic. The retained child may actually out-perform his non-retained peers on at least some school-related tasks due to greater familiarity with some of the materials. If, however, the equity formulation is expanded to allow additional inputs beyond relative school performance, then the equity interpretation may be more plausible.

In naturally occurring circumstances, children are confronted with information about accomplishments within a context of other information that may be at least as salient as task performance (Graziano, 1978; Leventhal & Michaels, 1971; Thelen & Kirkland, 1976). It is these other salient, yet diffuse, items of information (e.g., size, race, grade status) that could function as inputs and hence, mediators in children's perceptions of their peers (Graziano, Musser, Rosen, & Shaffer, 1982).

The results of these empirical equity studies suggest that task performance is not the only basis for children's judgments of deservingness (Leventhal & Michaels, 1971). Walster and Walster (1975) proposed that these contextual determinants, i.e., status attributes associated with the individual such as physical strength, gender, and race, come to be seen as inputs. Thus, they are mediators in the distribution of resources.

Status generalization is a process that could help us understand how these relevant and/or irrelevant factors could operate to influence children's judgments of equitable exchanges. Several investigations have observed that children have conceptions which appear to be stereotyped about appropriate occupations for males and females, and peers younger and older than themselves (Feather, 1975; Thelen & Kirkland, 1976; Graziano, Musser, & Brody, Note 2). Furthermore, children assume different statuses and roles within the peer group. These group defined attributes determine the relationship of each child to other members of the group (Shaffer, 1979).

The implications are that status differences evoke differential evaluations about individuals and provide a basis for inferring differences in other capacities or characteristics possessed by the individual. Assumptions made about a person on the basis of their status category seem to be of two kinds. Specific expectations are formed about capacities which are relevant to the interaction itself; general (diffuse) expectations are formed about capacities that may extend beyond the context of the interaction (Berger & Fisek, 1970).

Perhaps an illustration would clarify the point. In accordance with the status generalization theory (Webster & Driskell, 1978),

children could possibly perceive a child who has been retained as having lower status than their regularly promoted counterparts. These differential status evaluations would determine the relationship between the retained and nonretained children (cf., Walster & Walster, 1975). For instance, it is possible that the grade retained child who performed as well as the non-retained child (on a school-related task) would be evaluated less favorably by their peers.

The aforementioned implications lead to another way (in addition to equity theory and status generalization) to consider peer reactions to children who have been retained. It is conceivable that a grade retained child is seen as somehow "different" by his or her non-retained peers. However, there is little information on the ways children interact with other children who are seen as somehow "different" from themselves (cf., Hartup, 1979; Lippitt, Polansky, & Rosen, 1952). For example, Lougee, Golden, and Hartup, (1977) note that most our knowledge of peer relations is based on studies in which children are highly similar to each other in age, race, gender, socioeconomic status, mental and physical capabilities etc. In particular, when grade-retained children interact with their new classmates, we may be observing a special case of naturally occurring mixed-age interaction.

There is now an established literature demonstrating that children's interactions do differ in same-age and mixed-age contexts (Furman, Rahe, & Hartup, 1979; Golden, 1981; Graziano, et al., 1976; Shatz & Gelman, 1973). The bulk of this research has stressed the potential ameliorative and therapeutic effects of mixed-age interaction. For example, Furman et al., (1979) found that by pairing socially withdrawn older children

with a younger partner, the socially withdrawn older child becomes more socially interactive with agemates.

Ameliorative effects may indeed occur in dyadic interaction, but there is also the possibility that the larger social context can make mixed-age interaction detrimental to the individual older child. In the natural ecology of elementary schools, for example, mixed-age interaction occurs when children are retained in grade due to academic deficiencies. Such grade retention may ameliorate academic differences, but social development may be detrimentally affected (Caswell & Foshay, 1957; Sandin, 1944).

It is because of these possibilities that this study was designed to assess the differential perceptions of second- and fifth-grade children, based on their grade status. Specifically this study will address the following questions: (a) Are older children in the same grade as the regularly promoted children perceived as having higher, lower, or equal status? (b) Do children who are retained have different perceptions of others who have been retained or regularly promoted? (c) Given comparable task performance (by the retained and non-retained students) what factors will contribute to the allocation of rewards from their peers? (d) Are there differences in the social cognitions and expectancies between children who have been retained and those who are regularly promoted?

In light of these questions, it was hypothesized that: (a) Grade retained children would evoke negative perceptions, and thus have lower status, than children regularly promoted. These effects will vary such that, children who are retained themselves will make more favorable attributions to similar-others (i.e., retained- target children) than

to the children who are not retained. (b) More favorable attributions will be made to children who are regularly promoted than to their ~~non~~-retained counterparts. (c) Children with perceived higher status (i.e., who are regularly promoted) will be preferred for academic and social tasks rather than children who are retained. (d) Given comparable task performance, the regularly promoted student will receive more rewards than will children who have been retained, and (e) Children who are retained will have less favorable social cognitions and expectancies about themselves and their school environment than will children who are regularly promoted.

Method

Overview of Design

Second and fifth grade retained and non-retained children provided measures of (a) differential peer reward allocations, (b) social partner, (c) task partner, (d) impressions and attitudes about the school environment, (e) report card expectancy, and (f) self-esteem measures. Race of examiner and order of presentation of measures were counterbalanced. Results were analyzed using multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) and separate univariate ANOVA's.

Participants

The sample for this study consisted of two hundred and nineteen children who attended a rural elementary school in Northeast Georgia. Participants were dichotomized by grade level and gender: 105 second graders (65 females and 40 males), 114 fifth graders (53 females and 61 males). Thirty-four percent of the subject population was African-American and sixty-five percent Caucasian-American. Mean ages at testing for the children who were retained second graders were, for males 111.50 months and for females 110.75 months. For the children who were regularly promoted, mean age for females was 94.89 months and for males 92.65 months. Mean age at testing for retained fifth graders was 146.45 months for females and 145.0 months for males; and mean age for the non-retained students for males was 127.48 months and 127.27 months for females.

Forty-six percent of the population had been retained and 54% had not been retained in grades. Parental consent was obtained for each child and the child was again asked if she or he would like to participate before arriving to the experimental room. No child with parental permission declined to participate.

Procedures

Six undergraduates and two graduate students served as experimenters; there were two African-American females and one male, four Caucasian American females and one male. The children were escorted to and from their classrooms by an experimenter. Each child was interviewed individually. His or her responses to each question were recorded by the experimenter on the children's individual data sheet.

The initial phase of the experiment consisted of collecting self-esteem measures from each child. The remainder of the dependent variables were then presented, in a fixed order, to each child.

Self-Esteem Measures

The method used was the Katz and Zigler (1967) self-image disparity approach. The self-esteem data were collected prior to the other dependent measures. Each child was assessed individually by an experimenter of the same gender, but race of examiner was counterbalanced within gender. The experimenters were blind to the child's grade status, i.e., retained or not retained.

The participants were told that the experimenter wanted to find out what the children thought about themselves. They were told that there were no right or wrong answers, and that they were to respond as they felt. The experimenter collected the information verbally from each child and recorded responses on the appropriate sheet. In

addition, the children were asked if they understood each word. There were standard prompts listed for the experimenter for each word.

Each questionnaire consisted of 20 adjectives, ten positive and ten negative. For each adjective there were two responses, "yes" or "no." Three questionnaires were given to assess the real self, ideal self, and social self (see Appendix A). Positive responses were given a score of zero and negative responses were scored as one.

Allocation Task

The allocation task was adapted from the procedures designed by Graziano (1978); see also Graziano, Brody, and Berstein, 1980. This task was utilized to assess the effects of status generalization in specific situations. The materials used were portions of a story by Tolstoy (1972) (see Appendix B) entitled "The Turnip," three 13 x 9 cm Polaroid color snapshots and ten red circular prize chips.

The students were shown the color snapshots of two unfamiliar children (from another school district) who were of the same race, sex, and grade as the subject. For second graders, one stimulus child (i.e., child in the snapshot) was taller and older than her or his counterpart. The student was told that their ages were nine- and seven-years respectively. For fifth graders, the student was told that the stimulus children's ages were twelve- and ten-years, respectively. Underneath each stimulus child's photograph was the printed portion of the story which the stimulus child allegedly had read. For instance, one stimulus child had clearly read a considerably greater portion of the story than had the other stimulus child. When the experimenter was sure the child understood which student in the photograph had read the

appropriate story fragment, the following instructions were given: "Subject's name, I want you to give each child as many prize chips as you think she (or he) should have for reading the story. Now remember you have ten chips." The experimenter then told the child to place the amount of chips they think the children should get beside her (or his) snapshot. This process was repeated two more times so that the child responded under conditions where the retained child had read more than, less than, and the same as her or his non-retained counterpart.

Social Partner Choice

This task was designed to assess the degree of status generalization to a task-irrelevant situation, e.g., not related to the school environment. Each child was shown a different color snapshot of two unfamiliar children, from another school district, who were of the same race, sex, and grade as the subject. Next the subjects were shown a 20 x 25 mm color snapshot of a playground. Each subject was asked, "If you had a chance to play at this playground, which playmate would you choose"?

Task Partner Choice

This task was designed to assess the degree of status generalization to a specific, school related situation. The children were shown another pair of children in a Polaroid color snapshot. The children were of the same race, sex, and grade as the subject. Then the children were shown five arithmetic problems (taken from either the second or fifth graders' textbook). The children were asked, "If you were asked to do these problems which partner would you choose to help you"?

Impressions/Attitudes

Other measures were used to assess (a) the child's impressions and attitudes about a student who has been retained and (b) as a manipulation check. Each child viewed a 13 x 9 cm color snapshot of two strange children who were of the same race, sex, and grade as the subject. The second graders were told that the stimulus children were seven and nine years old, respectively, The fifth graders were told that the stimulus children were ten and twelve years old, respectively. The following open-ended questions were asked in counter-balanced order:

1. "Guess why this student (points to picture) is older than this student (points to picture)"?
2. "Can you think of some words that describe this student (points to picture of the older child)"?
3. "Can you think of some words that describe this child (points to younger child)"?
4. "Guess who is liked better"?

Incomplete Stimulus Situation

This measure was used to assess the participant's impressions and attitudes about the school environment (e.g., "School is a place where..."; "I like school because..."). The participants were asked to complete six sentence stems (see Appendix C). The sentence stems used were adapted from Mussen (1960).

Report Card Expectancy

This method was adapted from Entwisle and Hayduk (1978) to assess the child's academic self-image. Each child was asked to guess what her

next report card would look like. A large red poster (approximately 960 cm x 960 cm) was prepared with titles of school subjects "reading," "arithmetic," and "conduct". Next to the "report card" were large letters, (three copies of each) A, B, C, D, F; which the child was asked to place on the relevant report card squares.

Before playing the game, the children were asked if they knew what a report card was, and what the grades represented. After the children indicated that they understood what was expected of them, the experimenter asked them to guess by picking up a letter grade and placing it in the appropriate square, i.e., one for reading, arithmetic, and conduct.

Upon completion of the tasks outlined above, the children were thanked for their participation and invited to take a small toy from the experimenter's prize bin.

Results

The experimenter coded all observations with the assistance of three undergraduate students. A reliability check was made for the judgmental observations, i.e., impression and attitude questions and the incomplete sentence stems. The undergraduates, one female and two males, were blind to the predictions and design of the research project. Intercoder reliabilities for each judgmental observation were calculated as correlations. Six sets of correlations were computed (i.e., correlations between coder one and coder two, coder two and coder three, etc.). Of all correlations obtained none were below .90, ($\underline{M}$ = .93). Where there was disagreement, a discussion was held until a consensus was reached. Since the correlations were satisfactorily high, the experimenter's coding sheet was used for all analyses.

Manipulation Check

The first question the children were asked was, "Can you guess why these children are in the same grade and one is older than the other"? We designed this question so that we would not have to label the children as retained and thus, create a response bias in the sample population. Basically we wanted to show that the children are cognizant of the grade status of their peers. Our data indicated that they are aware of the retained versus the non-retained children.

The responses to this question were coded: 0- a "hit", meaning the participant clearly identified a retained child; 1, a "semi-hit",

meaning that although the participant did not respond with any key words, (e.g., "left-back", "not prompted", "failed"), his or her subsequent responses indicated they were aware the student failed a grade; 2, a "miss", meaning that participants did not verbalize grade status of the student in any context; and 3, no response.

A digression is necessary so that the "condition" factor can be explained. The condition factor was a design procedure used to counterbalance the height and grade status of the target children. The height of the target children was mainpulated independently of grade status since previous research has shown that height (size) can influence children's social judgments (e.g., Graziano, 1978; Graziano, Musser, Rosen, & Shaffer, 1982). Therefore, in one condition (coded 0), the target children were labelled "correctly", i.e., the taller (older) child was retained and the shorter (younger) child was not retained. In the other condition (coded 1) the target children were labelled in the reverse order, i.e., the taller-target child was labelled as younger and not retained, and the shorter target-child was said to be older and retained.

All responses to question one (except the "no response" category) were subjected to a 2 (grade status) x 2 (grade) x 2 (gender) x 2 (condition) analysis of variance (ANOVA), (Lunney, 1970). Significant main effects for grade status, F (1,184) = 7.95, p = .005, and grade, F (1,184) = 15.57, p = .0001 emerged. The non-retained participants would reliably identify the retained-stimulus children more often (M = .47) than the retained participants (M = .76). Similarly fifth graders identified the retained-stimulus children more often (M = .40), than did second graders (M = .86). Duncan's multiple range test showed

that these differences were significant at the .05 level. Furthermore a significant Condition x Gender interaction emerged, F (1,184) = 5.81, p = .005. The shape of the interaction was disordinal, which suggests that male and female participants react differently to relative size. Post hoc analysis which used Duncan's test, revealed significant differences, p = .05. These analysis were interpreted as follows: female participants would identify the retained stimulus child in the retained-shorter condition more often (M = .44) than in the retained-taller condition (M = .64); however, this occurrence is reversed with males, in the retained-shorter condition they identified the retained stimulus child less often (M = .90) than in the retained-taller condition (M = .42).

Since this question served as a manipulation check, it was assumed that the majority of the children would readily "guess" one of the stimulus children had been retained. The assumption was confirmed. Sixty-seven percent (135) of this sample "guessed" correctly while 23% (65) missed.

Discrimination Hypotheses

Impression and Attitude Measures. The first prediction was that children would have negative perceptions about their grade-retained peers. Additionally, a rater's grade status x target's grade status interaction was predicted. This means that raters who were retained themselves would make more favorable attributions about retained targets than would those raters who were regularly promoted.

The data relevant to the above prediction were the responses given to the impression and attitude questions. For questions two and three,

the participants were asked (in a random order) to describe the retained and non-retained stimulus child. For coding purposes, question two refers to the retained- stimulus child and question three refers to the non-retained stimulus child. Responses to these questions were coded: 0 - uncodable, 1 - negative, 2 - neutral, or 3 - positive. The dependent variables were rater's grade status (retained vs not retained), grade (second vs fifth), gender (male vs female) and condition (retained-taller vs retained shorter).

Question two. When the codable responses were subjected to a 2 (grade status) x 2 (grade) x 2 (gender) x 2 (condition) ANOVA, a significant Condition x Grade status x Gender interaction emerged, $F(1,184) = 5.37$, $p = .02$. It appears that the male and female participants are reacting differently to the retained child as a function of the size of the retained-stimulus children. For instance, when the retained stimulus child was taller than the non-retained stimulus child, male students who were themselves retained did not differentiate between the two stimuli children, M's = 1.69 and 1.60, respectively; however, the non-retained males gave more negative descriptions of the retained-shorter stimulus child than of the retained-taller child; M's = 1.37 and 1.75, respectively. The retained-female participants gave more negative descriptions about the retained-taller target child ($M = 1.54$) than about the retained-shorter stimulus child ($M = 1.73$). However, the non-retained females did the exact opposite, they gave more negative descriptions about the retained-shorter stimulus child ($M = 1.30$) than about the retained-taller stimulus child ($M = 1.74$).

The children's responses showed that, while both second and fifth graders tended to respond neutrally (77% and 75% respectively), more

fifth graders responded negatively (12%) than did second graders (less than 1%). (Eight second graders and two fifth graders gave positive responses.) More females (52%) than male participants (46%) gave neutral responses; the male participants accounted for virtually all of the negative responses (minus 1 female) and the females accounted for all of the positive responses.

It appears that there is some support in the direction of the hypothesis. There are different perceptions of the retained children which are related to the raters themselves. Furthermore, these differential evaluations are mediated by the height (size) of the retained stimuli children in relation to the height of the non-retained stimulus children. Sixty-two percent of the children gave neutral responses; with the addition of both size (height) and grade status factors however, discriminative evaluations do emerge.

Question three. This question pertains to the participant's descriptions of the non-retained-target children. It was predicted that the non-retained child would receive more favorable evaluations than the retained child by their peers. When the codable responses were subjected to a 2 (grade status) x 2 (grade) x 2 (gender) x 2 (condition) ANOVA, only two marginally significant main effects emerged, grade status, F (1,184) = 3.02, p = .08., and grade, F (1,184) = 3.11, p = .07. These results indicated that the majority of these second and fifth graders gave neutral responses, (74%); while 1% of the second graders and 6% of the fifth graders gave negative responses; 2% of the second graders and less than 1% of the fifth graders gave positive responses. Furthermore, 73% of the female subjects and 75% of the males gave neutral responses; while 11% of the males and 3% of

the females gave negative responses; and 5% of the females and less than 1% of the males gave positive responses. Furthermore, 39% of the retained participants and 42% of the non-retained participants gave neutral responses. While 5% of the retained and 3% of the non-retained participants gave negative responses. However, 2% of the retained and 2% of the non-retained participants gave positive descriptions about the non-retained stimuli children.

Supplemental analyses. Since responses to questions two and three included both "hits" and "misses," it was possible that the inclusion of children who generated "misses" obscured any underlying patterns. Consequently, responses of children who scored "hits" on question one were analyzed separately in a 2 (grade status) x 2 (grade) x 2 (gender) x 2 (condition) MANOVA. The dependent variables were the impression and attitude questions, task partner, social partner, and allocation of rewards. (See Table 1 for significant univariate effects for the impression and attitude questions.)

Pillai's trace (Olsen, 1976) showed significant effects of gender, $p = .02$, grade, $p = .0001$, and a Condition x Grade interaction, $p = .01$. Just as the total sample, the majority (70%) of the sub-sample (i.e., those children who correctly "guessed" that one target child had been retained) responded with neutral descriptions. However, the males gave more negative descriptions than did the females (frequencies were 26 and 4 respectively). The significant main effect for grade indicated that while the majority of this sub-population's fifth and second graders responded neutrally, more second graders responded negatively than did fifth graders. Less than 1% of the sample responded with positive descriptions. Results indicated that, in the retained-

Table 1

Univariate Results for Impressions and Attitudes

Controlling for "Hit" Responses

Impressions/Attitudes	F-Value*	P-Value
Question 1		
Grade status	7.68	.01
Condition	5.19	.02
Gender	5.81	.01
Grade	15.16	.002
Grade status x grade	4.08	.04
Condition x grade	9.18	.002
Grade status x condition x grade	4.92	.02
Gender x grade	4.41	.03
Question 2		
Grade status x condition x gender	3.65	.05
Question 4		
Condition x grade	4.93	.03

*Note. All *df* = (1,142)

taller condition, generally all raters (second and fifth graders) responded neutrally. However, in the retained-shorter condition, fifth grade raters gave more negative descriptions (M = 1.51) than did second graders (M = 1.69). Duncan's post hoc analysis did not reveal any significant differences.

Since the sub-population's pattern, as indicated above, did not differ from the total population, the univariate analyses will not be discussed.

It appears that there are differential evaluations given by the retained and non-retained raters; furthermore it appears as though these differential evaluations are influenced by the relative height of the target children and whether or not the raters themselves are male or female.

Question four. The measure asked that the participants guess which stimulus child (retained or non-retained) would be liked better. It was predicted that the non-retained child would be favored by their peers, as opposed to the retained child. When responses to this question were subjected to a 2 (grade status) x 2 (grade) x 2 (gender) x 2 (condition) ANOVA, a significant Condition x Gender interaction emerged, F (1,184) = 5.22, p = .02. The results indicated that the fifth graders believed the retained-shorter target child would be liked better (33%) than the retained-taller target child (24%.). And conversely, when the second graders viewed a target child who was retained and shorter, they perferred that child less (22%) often than when the target child was retained-taller (30%). Whereas, when the non-retained stimulus child was taller than the retained stimulus child, more fifth graders (26%) than second graders (20%) preferred the

former. And 26% of the second graders preferred the non-retained stimulus child if she or he were shorter than their non-retained counterpart while only 16% of the fifth graders made similar choices. There was also a significant grade status main effect, F (1,184) = 3.87, p = .05. Participants who had been retained preferred the retained-target child (M = .50) more often than the participants who had not been retained (M = .38).

In essence, 55% of the participants chose the retained stimulus child, however it made a difference as to whether the retained target child, was taller or shorter than their non-retained counterpart.

The results from the impression and attitude questions offer support for the prediction in that there are differential evaluations for the retained and non-retained (stimuli) children by their peers. The most interesting findings are that these evaluations are moderated by the (a) size of the retained and non-retained (stimuli) children, (b) the grade of the raters, and (c) whether or not the raters have been retained themselves. There is further support for these findings based on other measures used in this study.

Partner Choice

Task partner. It was predicted that children with perceived higher status (i.e., who are regularly promoted) would be preferred for school-related (e.g., academic) tasks. To test this hypothesis, the participants were asked to choose (between a retained and non-retained stimulus child) a partner to help him or her with a math assignment. When responses were subjected to a 2 (grade status) x 2 (grade) x 2 (gender) x 2 (condition) ANOVA, significant effects for grade, F (1,203)

= 12.17, p = .001, and a Grade status x Gender interaction, F (1,203) = 5.72, p = .02 emerged.

Fourteen percent of the second graders chose the non-retained target child and 86% chose the retained target child for the academic task. Similarly, 34% of the fifth graders chose the non-retained stimulus child and 66% chose the retained stimulus child. This is contrary to the prediction. When asked directly why they made their choices, some of the participants stated that the older (retained) stimulus child had more experience with the academic task, when they failed a grade, and would be better able to assist them with the work.

The shape of the Grade status x Gender interaction was disordinal. A smaller percentage of the retained female participants (74%) chose the retained stimulus child than did the non-retained female participants (87%), Ns = 55 and 63, respectively. Conversely, 76% of the retained male participants and 61% of the non-retained male participants preferred the retained stimulus child for the academic task (N = 47 and 54 respectively). Duncan's test revealed significant differences between the non-retained male fifth graders M = .40, p = .05, (which indicates they chose the non-retained stimulus child) and all other subjects.

Social partner. As stated previously, it was predicted that the non-retained stimulus child would be preferred for the school-irrelevant (e.g., social) activity. The participants were asked to choose a playmate for going to the playground. When responses were subjected to a 2 (grade status) x 2 (grade) x 2 (gender) x 2 (condition) ANOVA, significant main effects for raters' grade status, F (1,203) = 3.99, p = .05, and grade, F (1,203) = 4.42, p = .04.

Support for the prediction was indicated. Overall, the majority of the sample preferred to play with the non-retained stimulus child (55%). However, differential preferences were stated, the non-retained raters preferred the younger (non-retained target child) more often (59%) than did retained raters (48%). The grade effects showed that the second graders preferred the (older) retained-target child more often (52%) than did fifth graders (40%). Duncan's test indicated these differences were significant, $p = .05$.

Allocation task. Prediction three states that given comparable task performance, the regularly promoted stimulus child will receive more rewards (prize chips) than will stimulus children who are retained. Allocation data was analyzed using a 2 (condition) x 2 (grade status) x 2 (grade) x 2 (gender) x 3 (relative task performance) ANOVA, with repeated measures on the last factor. Additionally, a separate p - correlation between allocations and task performance was computed for each individual participant (see Graziano, 1978). These correlations were analyzed in the same format as the aforementioned ANOVA, excluding the repeated measures factor.

The univariate analysis showed significant effects for task performance, F (1,406) = 189.85, $p = .0001$, a Gender x Performance interaction, F (1,406) = 7.64, $p = .001$, and a Condition x Gender x Grade interaction, F (1,406) = 6.74, $p = .01$.

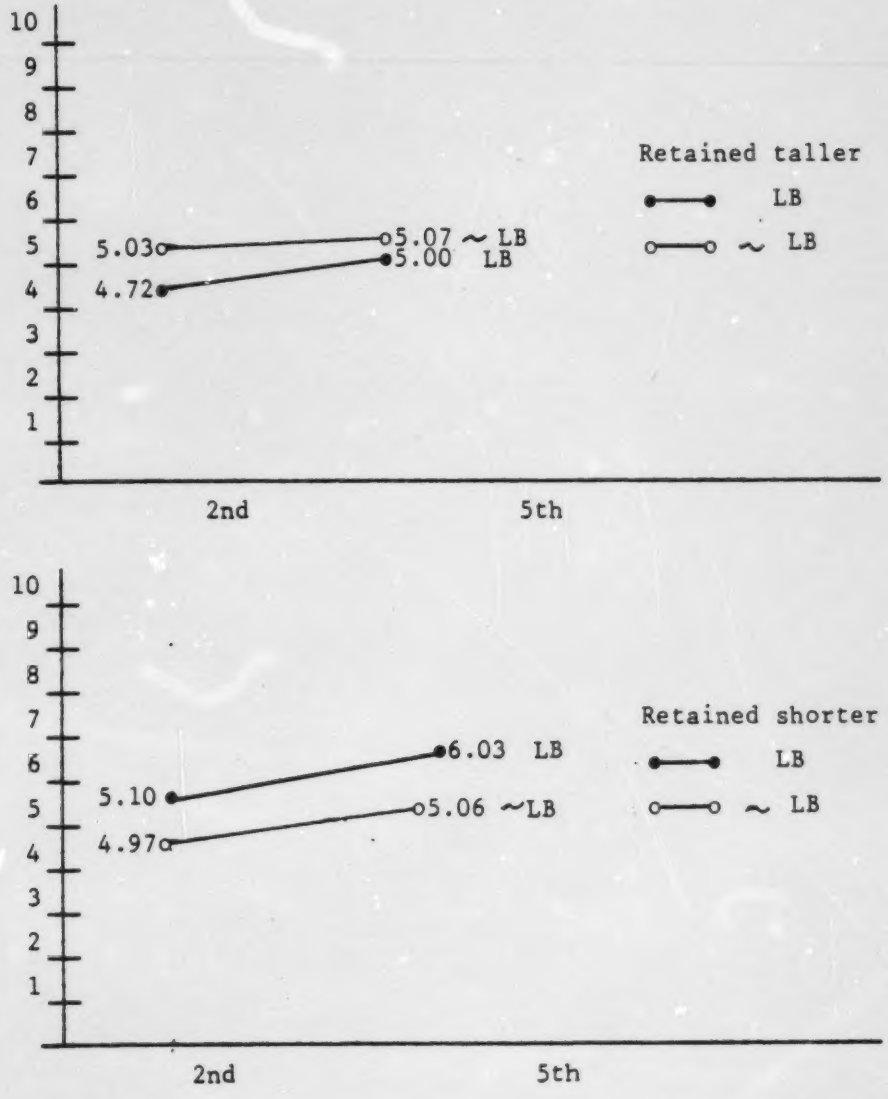
How well the retained-target child performed, in comparison to his or her counterpart, was a major contributing factor for the number of prize chips awarded to them by the participants. A total of 10 chips were to be allocated. In allocation one, when the target child did not read as much of the story portion as his or her counterpart (the non-

retained child), an average of 4.0 prize chips were allocated by the participants. The average number of prize chips allocated to the target child when she or he read the same as their counterpart (allocation 2) was 5.0; and in allocation 3, where the target child read more than his or her counterpart, an average of 6.0 prize chips were allocated by participants. Post hoc analysis, using Duncan's procedure revealed significant differences between males ($\underline{M}$ = 3.6) and females ($\underline{M}$ = 4.0) on allocation of chips in the "less than" condition, $\underline{p}$ = .05. Additionally, gender differences between males ($\underline{M}$ = 5.1) and females ($\underline{M}$ = 4.8) on allocation of chips on the "equal" performance $\underline{p}$ = .05, emerged. Furthermore, significant differences between conditions for "equal" performance were revealed, $\underline{p}$ = .05, $\underline{M}$s = 5.1 for the retained-shorter condition and 4.8 for the retained-taller condition. This means that the non-retained taller stimulus child received less ($\underline{M}$ = 4.8) even though performance was equal and the non-retained shorter stimulus child received more ($\underline{M}$ = 5.1) than the retained-taller stimulus child.

The notion that both the grade status of the target child and the height of these children are important factors for children when allocating rewards was further supported by the three-way interaction. This Condition x Grade status x Grade interaction indicated that, when the target child (retained) was taller than his or her counterpart, both retained second and fifth graders were less charitable with rewards than when the target child was shorter than his or her counterpart. In contrast, when the target child (retained) was taller than his or her counterpart, the non-retained second and fifth grade subjects were more generous than when the target child was shorter (see Table 2). As such, results seem to indicate that while grade status of the target

Table 2

Allocation Task "Equal" Performance



Condition x Grade status x Grade, p =.01

child is important, the size of retained-target children cannot be discounted. The reason(s) that discrimination occurs is unclear; perhaps the retained rater feels as though a retained-taller (target) child should be able to perform better than his or her retained-shorter counterpart. As such they reward the retained-taller child with fewer chips than the retained shorter (target) child.

P-correlations. These correlations were computed for each individual and assessed as the dependent variable in a 2 (grade status) x 2 (grade) x 2 (gender) x 2 (condition) MANOVA. The significant effect revealed was gender, F (1,203) = 6.04, p = .01. Here, the male subjects tended to be more task-oriented than the female subjects, P = .80 and 63, respectively. Namely, these results are consistent with Graziano, Musser, Rosen, & Shaffer, 1982.

Social Cognitions and Expectations

It was predicted that children who are retained will have less favorable social cognitions and expectancies, both about themselves and their school environment, than will children who are regularly promoted. Data relevant to this prediction are the incomplete sentence stems and the report card expectancy measure. These measures were analyzed in separate 2 (grade status) x 2 (grade) x 2 (gender) ANOVA's.

School-Environmental Hypotheses

Incomplete sentence stems. The first sentence the participants were asked to complete was "school is a place where..." Responses were coded 0 - subject matter, 1 - socially related, 2 - achievement related, or 3 - uncodable. The univariate analysis did not include the uncodable responses.

The ANOVA did not indicate any significant effects. There was a marginally significant main effect for gender, F (1,95) = 3.44, p = .06. The responses indicated that 47% of the males gave responses pertaining to subject matter and 53% of the females gave responses pertaining to the social aspects of school.

The second incomplete sentence blank was "Home work is..." The responses were coded 0 - uncodable, 1 - negative, 2 - neutral, or 3 - positive. It was predicted that the retained children would have a less favorable view of homework than the non-retained children. Univariate analysis did not include the uncodable responses. Significant main effects emerged for grade, F (1,95) = 4.53, p = .03. These results indicated that the second graders (M = 1.66) were neutral towards homework, whereas the fifth graders were generally negative (M = 1.35). Furthermore, the female participants were more negative towards homework (M = 1.40) than were the male participants (M = 1.56). Duncan's multiple range test indicated that these differences were significant at the .05 level.

The third incomplete sentence stem was used to investigate the differences between retained and non-retained students' view of the teacher. Responses were coded: 0- task relevant, 1- socially related, or 3- neither. The ANOVA did not include the "neither" category. The univariate analysis did not reveal any significant differences. Clearly 94% of the population responded with task relevant statements; while 6% gave socially related responses.

The fourth incomplete sentence stem was "I like school because..." Responses were coded: 0 - subject matter, 1 - socially related, 2 - achievement related, or 3 - uncodable. The uncodable responses were not

included in the analysis. There were no significant effects indicated by the univariate analysis. A marginally significant Grade status x Gender interaction was indicated, F (1,95) = 3.15, p = .07. The retained and non-retained males gave subject matter responses (M's = .43 and .44 respectively) whereas the retained females gave subject matter responses (M = .27) and the non-retained females gave more socially related responses, M = .60.

When the participants were asked to complete the sentence "I do not like school because...", responses were coded 0 - subject matter, 1 - socially related, 2 - achievement related, 3 - uncodable, or 4 - disciplinary measures. (Only one student gave an achievement-related response.) Again, the uncodable responses were not included in the analysis. When the responses were subjected to an ANOVA a significant main effect for grade emerged, F (1,95) = 13.11, p = .005. The fifth graders stated that they did not like school because of the subject matter (M = .37); whereas the second graders indicated that they did not like school because of socially related aspects (M = 1.46).

The last incomplete sentence stem was designed to see if the retained or non-retained students would include school if they could be granted a wish. Responses were coded, 0 - school relevant, 1 - school irrelevant, or 3 - no response. The analysis did not include the "no response " category. The univariate analysis indicated a significant main effect for grade, F (1,95) = 8.15, p = .005. These results indicated that 90% of the second graders and 70% of the fifth graders wanted to be granted a wish which was irrelevant to school. Whereas 10% of the second graders and 30% of the fifth graders wanted a wish

that was relevant to school. There were no significant main effects or interactions with retention status.

Self-Expectation Hypothesis

Report-card expectancy. It was predicted that retained children would have lower academic self-images than their non-retained counterparts. Following the procedure of Entwisle and Hayduk (1978), the participants were asked to guess what grades they would receive on their next report card in reading, math, and conduct. Responses were coded: A = 4, B = 3, C = 2, D = 1, and F = 0. When responses were subjected to a 2 (grade status) x 2 (grade) x 2 (gender) ANOVA, several significant effects were revealed.

Reading. The children were asked to pick the letter grade they would receive on their next report card in reading. Although there were significant main effects for grade status and grade, these effects were moderated by a significant Grade status x Grade interaction, F (1,211) = 8.06, p = .005. These results showed that the non-retained and retained fifth graders expected similar grades (M's = 3.12 and 3.16 respectively) but the non-retained second graders expected higher grades (M = 3.70) than their retained counterparts, M = 3.18. Additionally, significant main effects for gender, F (1,211) = 3.87, p = .05, emerged. It was indicated that the female students expected higher grades in reading (M = 3.41) than did the male students (M 3.19).

Arithmetic and conduct expectations. There were no significant effects revealed in the univariate analysis for either the arithmetic or conduct expectations. Marginally significant for the arithmetic expectations were grade effects, F (1,211) = 2.77, p = .09 and a Grade x

Gender interaction, F (1,211) = 3.57, p = .06. The conduct expectation analysis indicated marginal effects for gender, F (1,211) = 3.59, p = .06. Post hoc analysis for the arithmetic expectation (using Duncan's procedure) indicate significant differences between the retained fifth grade males (M = 2.91) and all other participants (all Ms = 3.0), p = .05. Also significant differences were indicated between non-retained fifth grade males, M = 2.62, for the conduct expectation, and all other participants, p = .05.

It was predicted that the retained students would have lower academic self-images than their non-retained counterparts. However, there was no support for this hypothesis. It is interesting to find that the second graders expected higher grades in reading than did the fifth graders. It is possible that the fifth graders have a "reality constraint" operating, in that they are more aware of the work involved in excelling in school, as well as of higher demands are placed upon them in relation to the second graders.

Self-Concept Hypothesis

Self-esteem measure. It was predicted that students who have been retained would have a lower self-concept than non-retained subjects. Following Katz and Zigler (1967), we first employed the usual measure of difference between "real" and "ideal," labelled "actual." Also a correlation matrix (see Appendix D) was constructed to see the degree of relationship between each of the self-concept measures. Available data also allow the assessment of the effect of experimenter's race on children's self-reports.

Actual self-concept. The participants' discrepancy ("actual") scores were analyzed by a 2 (grade status) x 2 (grade) x 2 (gender) x 2 (experimenter's race) x 2 (participant's race) ANOVA. Several significant effects were revealed: (all F's (1,188)), participant's race (F = 5.73), p=.02, grade status (F = 8.30), p=.004, grade (F = 9.17), p=.0003, Participant's race x Grade interaction (F = 4.37), p= .04, Grade status x Grade interaction (F = 5.42), p=.02, and an Experimenter's race x Participant's race x Grade status x Gender interaction (F = 12.52), p=.0005.

As predicted, differences were found between the retained and non-retained participants; however, the differences were in the opposite direction, with the retained participants' "actual" concept being higher (M = 2.02) than the non-retained participants' (M = 2.88). These differences were significant, as indicated by Duncan's test, p= .05.

The significant effect for participant's race showed that the African-American participants had a higher actual-concept (M = 2.0) than the Caucasian-American participant's (M = 2.74). Duncan's analysis indicated that these differences were significant, p = .05. The main effect for grade indicated that second graders' actual-concept (M = 2.02) was higher than fifth grader's (M = 2.91); Duncan's analysis indicated these differences were significant, p = .05. Furthermore, the Race x Grade interaction indicated that the African-American second graders' (M = 1.94) actual self-concept was higher than the African-American fifth graders' (M = 2.04) and the Caucasian-American fifth graders' 3.39). Generally the second graders' actual-concept was indexed as higher (i.e., more positive) than the fifth graders'.

Self-, Ideal, and Social- concepts. A 2 (experimenter's race) x 2 (participant's race) x 2 (grade status) x 2 (gender) x 2 (grade) MANOVA was computed to assess the relationship of the participants' self-, ideal-, and social-concepts. Pillai's trace significance test revealed many main effects and higher-order interactions, so interpretation of multivariate effects are complicated. (See Table 3)

Self-concept. When responses were subjected to the univariate analysis, using the same format as the MANOVA, many significant effects emerged. The grade status main effect indicated that participants who had been retained had a higher (more favorable) self-evaluation (M = 3.18) than participants who had not been retained (M = 3.85), F (1,188) = 4.91, p = .03. Also an Experimenter's race x Participant's race x Gender interaction emerged, F (1,188) = 8.01, p = .0005. These results indicated that the African-American males reported a higher self-concept with the same race experimenter (M = 2.81) than when interviewed by a Caucasian-American experimenter (M = 2.94). When the Caucasian-American females were interviewed by the same race experimenter, their self-concept was more favorable (M = 3.46) than when they were interviewed by an African-American experimenter, M = 4.25. When interviewed by an African-American experimenter, both Caucasian-American males and African-American females held a more positive view of themselves (M = 3.05 and 3.57 respectively) than when the interviewer was Caucasian-American, Ms = 3.96 and 3.76, respectively. Post hoc analysis using Duncan's test indicated these differences were significant, p = .05.

Table 3

MANOVA Results for Self-Esteem Measures

	Pillai's Trace Statistics	
	F-Value	P-Value
Experimenter's race	3.30	.03
Experimenter's race x participant's race	6.50	.0004
Grade status	2.50	.05
Experimenter's race x grade status	2.65	.04
Experimenter's race x participant's race x grade status	3.33	.02
Participant's race x gender	2.66	.04
Experimenter's race x participant's race x gender	5.11	.002
Experimenter's race x grade status x gender	2.98	.03
Grade	4.78	.003
Experimenter's race x gender	2.50	.05
Experimenter's race x participant's race x grade	2.89	.03
Experimenter's race x gender x grade	2.53	.05
Participant's race x grade x gender x grade status	4.57	.004

*Note. All *df* = (3,186)

Furthermore, univariate analysis revealed significant effects for an Experimenter's race x Grade status x Gender interaction, F (1,188) = 6.54, p .01 and Subjects' race x Grade, F (1,188) = 4.47, p = .03. Post hoc analysis, using Duncan's procedure, did not reveal any significant diffrerences.

Ideal-concept. The most pronounced effects were indicated by the univariate analysis of the sample's ideal-concept. Again, many main effects and higher order interactions complicate the interpretation of the results (see Table 4). Given that the primary focus of this investigation was to assess the relationship of the sample's grade status, gender, and grade to the dependent measures, only these variables' effect will be discussed. Significant effects were revealed for gender, F (1,188) = 4.08, p = .04 and grade, F (1,188) = 6.73, p = .01. Results indicate that males have higher ideal standards, M = .99, in comparison to the female participants, M = 1.12. The fifth graders' ideal-concept measure indicated that they have higher ideal standards M = .88, than the second grades, M = 1.25.

Social-concept. Part of the Katz and Zigler (1967) self-concept measure included a questionnaire for the assessment of children's opinion on how "others" saw them. This measure was utilized in this study.

The only significant effect revealed by the univariate analysis, on the participant's social-concept measure, was an Experimenter's race x Participant's race x Gender interaction, F (1,188) = 5.30, p = .02. The results showed that the African-American experimenters received responses which indicated a higher social concept from the Caucasian-

Table 4

Univariate Results for Ideal Self-concept

	*F-Value	P-Value
Experimenter's race	7.64	.01
Participant's race	5.30	.02
Experimenter's race x participant's race	17.56	.0001
Experimenter's race x grade status	7.00	.01
Experimenter's race x participant's race x grade status	8.02	.005
Gender	4.08	.04
Experimenter's race x Gender	4.97	.02
Participant's race x gender	5.36	.02
Grade	6.37	.01
Experimenter's race x grade	5.82	.02
Experimenter's race x participant's race x grade	7.18	.01
Grade x gender	3.89	.05
Experimenter's race x gender x grade	6.97	.01
Participant's race x gender x grade	5.75	.01

*Note. All df = (1,188)

American males (M = 3.02) and the African-American females (M = 3.84) than did the Caucasian-American experimenters, Ms = 4.32 and 5.0 respectively. In contrast, the Caucasian-American experimenters received responses that indicated a higher social-concept from the African-American male participants (M = 3.35) and the Caucasian-American female participants (M = 3.64) than did the African-American experimenters, Ms = 4.0 and 4.30, respectively. Duncan's multiple range test indicated that these differences were significant, p=.05. Furthermore, Duncan's post hoc analysis showed that Caucasian-American non-retained fifth grade males had a significantly (p =.05) lower social-concept (M = 6.60) than all other participants.

Discussion

Grade retention is a widespread policy used in the educational arena. As previously stated, children are usually retained in grades because they fall below certain standards of academic achievement or social maturity. According to Sandin (1944), "Non-promotion is a sort of official reminder to the pupil that he (she) has failed in an aspect of his (her) career which to many children is quite important. Moreover, a child who is held back academically, continues to grow in years, in physical dimensions, and at least to some degree in his (her) social aspirations and attitudes..." (p. 1).

On the other hand, a few investigators claimed that non-promotion was not detrimental to the child as believed (Chase, 1972; Saunders, 1941). There has been little systematic investigation of these claims and the information available could not allow us to make many conclusive statements about the effects of grade retention on the social development of children (Chase, 1972; Jackson, 1975; Sandin, 1944). Therefore, we designed this study to investigate the impact of grade retention on children, from the perspectives both of their own perceptions and from the perspective of "valued others," i.e., their peers.

The literature suggests that the school is one of the most influential institutions in the socialization of children. Additionally, it has been shown that peers play an important role in the socialization of children (Gump, 1980; Hetherington & Parke, 1979; Shaffer, 1979). This study was designed to assess second- and fifth-grade children's

perceptions about the retained child. We believed that the children's age (e.g., grade level) would effect their ability to differentiate between the retained and non-retained children. It was possible for the younger children (due to their developmental level or to their less sophisticated level of social (cognition) to the less discriminative toward a retained child than would their older counterparts (Shaffer, 1979). In other words, we anticipate developmental trends.

Our first task was to show that the children (both second and fifth graders) are cognizant of the grade-retained child. Our data indicated that they are able to distinguish between a non-retained and retained child. When the children were asked to "guess" why two children were in the same grade and one was older than the other, sixty-seven percent of the participants stated that one had been retained; and more often than not they would point to the older child in the dyad, regardless of the height manipulation.

Based on past research we predicted that the grade-retained children would evoke negative perceptions, and thus have lower status than children who are regularly promoted. The literature suggests that children do have stereotype conceptions and that they assume different statuses and roles within a peer group (e.g., Feather, 1975; Shaffer, 1979). If we could show that children do indeed have these differential evaluations for the retained child, then we could possibly observe discriminatory behavior towards a retained child by their peers.

Although the results were mixed, there was some evidence to support the above prediction. There are differential evaluations about the retained and non-retained children by their peers. For instance, when the children were asked to describe the retained-target

child (impression and attitude-question two) a significant interaction was revealed. The interesting finding here was that the non-retained males gave more negatve descriptions about the retained-shorter target child than of the retained-taller target child. The non-retained girls followed this pattern. However, the retained-female raters gave more negative descriptions about the retained-taller target child than to the retained-shorter target child. Clearly the grade status and gender of the raters are moderating their judgments. It appears as though the non-retained (male and female) raters focus on disjunctive information, i.e., the height of the target child is inconsistent with their grade status. Therefore, the evaluation is less favorable than when the information is consistent, i.e., the taller child is the retained child. However, the retained female raters appear less tolerant of "similar others", i.e., they gave less favorable descriptions about the retained-taller target child. The retained males were generally neutral about the target children, e.g., they gave descriptions about the color of clothing.

When the children were asked who would be liked better, either the older (retained) or younger (non-retained) child, fifty-five percent said the retained-target child. Again their choices varied according to the height of the retained-target child and the grade of the rater, i.e., a significant Condition x Grade interaction emerged. It was shown that the older raters (fifth graders) said the (older) retained-shorter target child would be liked better. Whereas the second graders said the retained-taller target child would be liked better. So it seems that the fifth-grade children were focusing on social status, while the second graders were focusing on height (a more visible cue).

Our data suggest that the children's evaluations of their retained and non-retained peers are moderated by (a) the size (height) of the retained-target child (b) whether or not the raters themselves had been retained, and (c) the grade of the raters. Further support for these findings were shown by other measures used in this investigation.

As stated previously, status differences evoke differential evaluations and provide the basis for inferring differences in other capacities or characteristics of the individual. Based on the status generalization theory, we predicted that (a) children who are regularly promoted would be preferred for a school-related task and (b) would also be preferred for a school-irrelevant task. Our data indicated that grade status promoted diffuse expectations but not specific expectations.

Seventy-five percent of the sample chose the retained-target child to help them with the academic task. Spontaneous comments the children made explained these seemingly contradictory results. The children stated that since the child had repeated a grade, he or she would have more experience and would be in a better position to help them than the non-retained child. But post hoc tests showed significant differences between the non-retained fifth graders' responses and all other participants' responses. These results showed that the non-retained fifth graders preferred the non-retained children to help them with the academic task. Differential social cognitions are suggested by these results. The older children seem to focus on the implications of being retained, whereas the younger children seem to reason that being retained and older implies "more experience," hence more helpful.

Nontheless, given that the majority of the children preferred the older (retained) target child to assist them, it was concluded that there was no support for the prediction as stated.

Support was revealed for prediction (b); the majority (55%) of the children in this study preferred to play with the non-retained (younger) target child rather than the retained (older) target child. Significant main effects for grade status and grade were revealed. The non-retained raters preferred the (younger) non-retained play partner more often than the retained partner; and the retained raters preferred the retained partner more often than the non-retained partner. Furthermore, the younger children (second graders) preferred the older (retained) target child more often than did the (older) fifth graders. It appears as though the younger children would prefer to play with someone older, whereas the older children would prefer a same-age playmate. Again, since the majority of the children had a significant preference for the non-retained play partner, it was concluded that there was support for the diffuse-expectation hypothesis.

We also predicted that the target children's grade status would influence the distribution of rewards they received on a school relevant task from their peers; in other words, the grade-retained children would be discriminated against. Past research suggests that, when children allocate rewards, task performance is not the only basis for children's judgments (e.g., Graziano, 1978, Graziano, et al., 1980; Leventhal & Michaels, 1971). Our data indicated that the most cogent evidence of discrimination occurred in the reward-allocation task when the retained and non-retained child's performance was equal.

The results suggest the subtle influences grade status could have on children's perceptions of their peers. Both second and fifth graders allocated fewer prize chips to the retained-taller target child than to their non-retained counterparts, even though their performance was equal, i.e., they had read the identical portion of the story. There was a notable exception to this occurrence. The non-retained second grade raters allocated more prize chips to the retained-taller child in the dyad. Intuitively this can be uderstood size is a more salient (i.e., highly visible) cue to the younger raters, thus more likely to influence their judgments than is task performance (Graziano, 1978; Graziano, et al., 1982). In contrast, older children (fifth graders) are more aware of "social cues," and from the aforementioned results, they appear to have lower expectations about the grade retained child than about the non-retained child.

It was concluded that there was some support for the predictions that the retained child would be the recipient of discriminatory acts. The retained children received less rewards even when their performance was equal to that of the non-retained children; however, this effect appears to be moderated by the height of the retained children. The retained children were not preferred for the school-irrelevant task; yet they were preferred for the school-relevant task. Nonetheless, the noteworthy findings were that these effects can be enhanced or debilitated by the height of the target child (in comparison to the non-retained target child) and the grade status and grade of the raters.

Chase (1972) proposed that a child who does not compete successfully in school could develop problems in living and in coping with his or her environment. This is not inconsistent with the conclusion

by Chase (1972) that non-promotion is not as detrimental as previously believed. Chase clarifies his position by stating that careful selection of the child who is retained and consistent monitoring of that child's progress is necessary to alleviate or decrease the possible negative effects of grade retention. This study (and others outlined earlier) suggest that academic performance and social adjustment are highly related. As such, we predicted that children who are retained would have less favorable social cognitions and expectancies about themselves and their school surroundings than would children who are regularly promoted. The data relevant to this prediction are (a) the incomplete sentence stems (b) the report card expectancy measure and, (c) the self-esteem measures.

The results from the incomplete sentence stems indicated that the retained and non-retained children did have different perceptions about their environment. However, the results of these measures are not conclusive. Forty-six percent of the population did not give "codable" responses. At best we can say that the results were mixed. Perhaps the students were not able to respond in such an abstract manner; support is suggested because more fifth graders responded (56%) than did second graders (32%). Nonetheless, interpretations of these results are difficult. Clearly more research is needed in this area that would employ more concrete dimensions for the younger less "cognitively" sophisticated student.

It was predicted that the retained children would have less favorable expectancies about themselves than their non-retained counterparts. Support for this prediction was not indicated even though there were significant main effects and high-order interactions on the reading

expectancy measure. For instance, the non-retained and retained fifth graders expected similar grades but the non-retained second graders expected higher grades than their retained counterparts. We suspect that the older children have a "reality constraint" that operates which allows them to consider the responsibilities that are required of them to receive high grades; support for this contention is suggested by the fact that even the retained-second graders (who are older than than their non-retained counterparts) expected lower grades than their non-retained classmates.

It has been proposed that reading is an important factor in the "self-definition" among elementary school children and that children do rely on their classmates (in their particular classroom) for academically relevant social comparisons (Smith & Johnson, Note 3). Therefore, we are not alarmed by the lack of significant effects for the math and conduct report card expectancy measures.

Based on previous research, we hypothesized that the retained children would have a lower self-concept than the non-retained children. However, the present data suggest that children who have been retained have a significantly higher "actual" self-concept than the non-retained children.

There are two possible explanations for this. First, children who have been retained are placed in classrooms where the work could be repetitive. Hence, they could perform better in this situation than they did previously. Since they could also be doing comparatively better than their classmates, their self-esteem is higher. This possibility has received support by Strang, Smith, and Rogers (1978) in their investigation of the mainstreaming phenomenon. These investigators

found that the educationally gifted children (when placed in classrooms together) make comparisons with "similar others" children. As such, their self-esteem was lower than when they were in a regular classroom.

The fact that our results showed that the non-retained children had significantly higher "ideal" standards than their retained peers proposes another interpretation. Since the "actual" self-concept is computed by the discrepancy score between the real-concept and ideal-concept measures the individual "ideal" standards of the children are important. It is possible that the retained children have lower "ideal" standards due to their past experiences in school (e.g., Centra & Potter, 1980). Conversely, the non-retained children have had more rewarding experiences and are motivated toward further success.

Our data support the second explanation. Furthermore, in this particular school, the retained children are not given "repetitive" work per se. Rather they start the new year at the level they completed the previous year and work from there.

Taken together, these data suggest that the impacts of grade retention are manifest in subtle ways. It is noteworthy that different effects of retention are obtained from younger and older children, and are differentially elicited by different examiners (e.g., recall the sifnificant race of examiner effects). These data also suggest that the impact of mixed age interaction is moderated by the larger social context in which the interaction occurs.

There are certain limitations to the present investigation. A large number of the children had been retained (46%). Since we did find som discriminative behavior toward the retained children, we feel the results are noteworthy. Perhaps if this study were replicated in an

institution where the rate of grade-retention was lower, different results could be obtained. There is a possibility that in the situation where grade-retention does not occur as frequently as it did in this school, children who are retained could be the recipients of more blatant acts of discrimination.

The fact that the measures of peer discrimination did not yield identical results could be attributed to the school's high retention rate or to the fact that different grade levels were in the assessments. Meaning that perhaps an investigation with children in the same grade could provide more clear-cut responses. This would of course entail either a longitudinal assessment or several replications which involve children in different grades.

Futhermore, some people might argue that our methods were "artificial" in that the children were only shown pictures. Ethical concerns would not all us to do otherwise: (a) we did not wish to stigmatize any child as grade-retained, and (b) we did not wish to solidify the children's attitudes toward a retained child.

The notion that grade-retention does in fact influence children's perceptions about their peers has been substantiated. These data also suggest that the grade status of the rater, the level of their social cognition abilities (e.g., grade level), and the height of the target (retained) child could possibly mediate children's perceptions. These speculations warrant further research.

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Appendix A

Self-esteem Questionnaire

The participants were asked to respond to the adjectives listed below in three situations, (1) For the real-concept measure, i.e., "Are you...?" (2) For the ideal-concept measure, i.e., "Would you like to be...?" and (3) For the social-concept measure, i.e., "Do other people see you as..."?

cheerful	yes	no
noisy	yes	no
hot-tempered	yes	no
shy	yes	no
good-natured	yes	no
fair	yes	no
selfish	yes	no
stubborn	yes	no
moody	yes	no
smart	yes	no
successful	yes	no
friendly	yes	no
sad	yes	no
easy-going	yes	no
sneaky	yes	no
lonely	yes	no
popular	yes	no
calm	yes	no
lazy	yes	no
honest	yes	no

Appendix B

Story Portions in the Target-Child's (retained)

Greater-Performance Condition

The Turnip

Once upon a time an old man planted a little turnip and said: "Grow, grow, little turnip, grow sweet! Grow, grow, little turnip, grow strong." And the turnip grew up sweet and strong and big and enormous. Then, one day, the old man went to pull it up. He pulled and pulled again, but he could not pull it up. He called the old woman.

The old woman pulled the old man. The old man pulled the turnip. And they pulled and pulled again, but they could not pull it up. So the old woman called her grandfather. The grandfather pulled the old woman, the old woman pulled the old man, the old man pulled the turnip.

The Turnip

Once upon a time an old man planted a little turnip and said: "Grow, grow, little turnip, grow sweet! Grow, grow little turnip, grow strong! And the turnip grew up sweet and strong and big and enormous. Then one day, the old man went to pull it up. He pulled and pulled again, but he could not pull it up. He called the old woman.

Appendix C

Incomplete Sentence Stems

1. School is a place where _____.
2. Homework is _____.
3. A teacher is a person who_____.
4. I like school because_____.
5. I do not like school because_____.
6. If I had one wish, I would like_____.

Appendix D

Correlation matrix for Self-concept Measures

	C	SC	IC	OC
C	1.000	0.860	-0.244	0.517
SC	--	--	0.284	0.634
IC	--	--	--	0.233
OC	--	--	--	1.000